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Childhood Education

Observing Children

*Cues for observing behavior—
each child is a custom job*

November 1953

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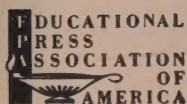
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To Stimulate Thinking
Rather Than
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1953-54: Learning At Its
Best

Childhood Education



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UCLA Nursery School, California

Parents and teachers need to observe and understand what is taking place before their eyes.

Why Observe?

LEARNING BY CHILDREN TAKES PLACE most productively when adults recognize and accept what the child himself is trying to discover and to master. Learning takes place, not by acquiring information or being told, but by a transactional process of relating himself to situations and people in ways that are meaningful to the individual. This marks a significant change from the former belief that the adult always knows best and should impose his goals and methods upon the child who, in turn, should do as he is told.

We are gradually understanding how difficult are the tasks children face in learning to live in our symbolic cultural world of meanings and values, and in our social order of rituals, formal patterns, and institutions. They are developing purposive, goal-seeking conduct, and, at the same time, maintaining their own individuality and integrity as idiomatic organism-personalities. It is becoming clear that, when unnecessarily denied or frustrated in what he is trying to do or when coerced into doing what he is not ready for or capable of doing, a child may outwardly conform but develop persistent feelings of guilt or of chronic resentment, with an image of the self that is not conducive to healthy personality development.

These feelings then enter into and color whatever he learns and may distort what he learns into antisocial or self-defeating activities that largely negate the adult's efforts. Measuring a child's performance by standardized tests and norms may show where he stands in relation to others of the same chronological age (but often of different stages of maturity). But these findings give little insight into the dynamic processes

of learning and developing through which adults can offer constructive help to a child in growing up. Tests and norms do not reveal where and how a child's capacity for development is often blocked or diverted into a futile and wasteful rebellion against adult authority or a withdrawal from living with his contemporaries.

The physician, the psychiatrist, the psychologist, the social worker, all those who are engaged in diagnosing and treating individuals rely upon interviews and, so far as possible, get a life history of the patient-client to help them to understand his illness, his problems, and his needs.

Parents and teachers engaged in trying to help children grow, learn, and develop as individual personalities especially need to observe and understand what is taking place before their eyes.

Thus it is important to become aware of the immensely rich, complex, and always changing events in a child's life, to be able to observe how the dynamic processes of growth and learning are expressed in exploratory activities, new interpersonal relationships, and the manipulation of materials and verbalizations.

When a child is exposed to an environment that is appropriate to his maturity, in contact with other children, under the supervision of a benevolent adult who genuinely respects a child's individuality, he will reveal in his actions and speech what is important and meaningful to him at that time. This may at first be puzzling to adult observers, but the meaning of his activities will become increasingly clear as the child proceeds to manipulate, to organize, and to invest his play with personal significance and feelings.

This is the crucial point: it is what play and creative activities mean to the individual child that is important, not how they compare with norms and standards of achievement or meet the adults' requirements—because learning to live in a symbolic world depends upon this uniquely human capacity to make the world meaningful, by imputing values and significance to things, events, and people.

One of the major obstacles a child faces in this learning is the adult who wants the child to perceive and act according to the adult's patterns and *who frequently interrupts his purposive activities and often destroys his capacity for sustained attention and persistent efforts.*

Teachers, without realizing it, often rob children of their capacity for absorbed and persevering efforts. They unnecessarily stop or interfere with what a child is trying to achieve—because the time schedule or the plans for group activity take precedence over the individual child's interests and eagerness to complete *his* work. Thus, if you observe children playing, you see that most little children have a good span of attention and a surprising capacity for sustained effort which they seem to lose after a short time in school. If adults do not respect the child's strivings he soon gives up trying and becomes more or less passively dependent on adult direction.

Careful observation of what a child is doing—working and striving to achieve something important for him—would make the teacher more sensitive to his need to be respected and protected from needless interruption. This means that sometimes the scheduled program is delayed or he misses some group activity.

A child, through these self-selected activities, especially creative work, is trying to discover himself, and also to relate himself to the world in his own individual way. That is to say, he plays out (as an adult talks out) and works through his confusions and problems, to release his feelings so that he can continue to learn, to grow, and develop. The adult can help this learning by looking at children with an ever-fresh and carefully observing eye, interpreting their observations always in terms of what they reveal about that specific child and his individual goal-seeking, purposive strivings.

But basic to children's learning is a conviction that with understanding, affectionate guidance, they can and will develop into healthy personalities with a feeling of worth and dignity. This is based on the premise that from their earliest years they have been recognized and treated as unique personalities and their individual goals and purposes have been respected and encouraged.—LAWRENCE K. FRANK, *formerly Director of Caroline Zachry Institute, New York.*



Buttons are to keep
people warm

Illustration by Maurice Sendak for "A Hole Is to Dig," (Ruth Krauss) courtesy Harper

Each Child Is a Custom Job

We are concerned with the fundamental values of democracy and how they are best developed. Here is an exciting article that tells of the task in the average classroom when we realize each child is a custom job.

NO CHALLENGE IN EDUCATION TODAY has greater vitality than education for democratic relationships. Not only must such education apply to all groups in our own culture, but we must find the ways it applies to all peoples throughout the world. What price education if we must see a third generation of our youth give their lives in the defense of democracy? The most important thing in the world today is how people treat people.

People everywhere are becoming aware of the increasing peril to civilization. They are increasingly concerned about man's growing power over material things. At the same time, people are becoming profoundly concerned over man's backwardness in social and in moral discipline. The biggest problem humanity faces is that of emotional maturity. The only hope of mankind is through progress in the improvement of human nature. Civilization cannot endure if men and women who handle the present resources of physical science remain primitive in their attitudes toward other human beings.

Two ideas are fundamental in the democratic faith. The first is *respect for the value of individual lives and personalities*. The second is that *each person shall consider the welfare of the group of prime importance, but the group must in turn consider the development of each individual as necessary to forward the highest achievement in group living*.

In recent years, education has moved from mass treatment of girls and boys to increasing adjustment to individual differences. Sometimes teachers wish children were all alike—it would make teaching easier. But each child is a custom job—no two are alike. Respect for the value of individual lives and personalities makes it necessary for teachers to know as much as they possibly can about each child. When we consider our complex democratic society, we are glad of the wide range of individual variation because of the wide diversity of jobs needed to be done.

An Average Class Has—

Let us look at the problem through the eyes of an American teacher. Joyce Monroe is the teacher of the eight- and nine-year-old group at Blackberry Lane School. She loves and understands children and serves them well because she actually knows the potentialities of every child and holds realistic expectancies for each one. Joyce knows that her group might be called an average class. She has one child who is definitely mentally retarded; she believes that with reasonably good educational opportunity suited to his needs, he may never become a candidate for institutional care. In fact, he will probably marry, have a family, and work industriously at a simple but necessary job in the community. Joyce recognizes two children whose intelligence would be classified as "border-

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line," and four, or possibly five, who are "dull" or slow learners. She is particularly concerned about these six or seven children because from this group usually comes the delinquent, the socially mal-adjusted, and the emotionally disturbed members of our society. Joyce believes, however, that if she and other teachers can help these children to acquire wholesome self-respect and self-reliance through success in school tasks which they can do and enjoy doing, that they can become well-adjusted and serve as the less-skilled workers every community needs.

At the other end of the curve of intellectual capacity, Joyce has classified four, or possibly five children as bright, two as very bright, and one as actually gifted. The leadership for the future probably will be found among these seven or eight children. Joyce is aware of the need to study the special interests and capacities of each of these bright children and plan opportunities for them to develop their talents with due social concern.

Between these two extremes, Joyce sees fourteen of her pupils as the sturdy so-called "average" children who are able to cope successfully with the developmental tasks of eight- and nine-year-olds. But the individuals who comprise the total group are confronted with other problems which will require Joyce's special help and understanding. Six of the children have a slight speech defect; one child is seriously defective in speech. Four children are emotionally disturbed. Joyce is distressed that all of these children are boys. Could it be that boys tend to show their frustrations through aggressive behavior and so are more easily identified? Could it be that the shy and withdrawing little girls are showing emotional disturbance also but in a way less annoying to the teacher and the other children and so the emotionally-

disturbed girl tends to be overlooked?

Two or three of the children have serious and recurrent health problems. One child has a serious hearing loss. One child comes from an economically impoverished home. Four children come from broken homes or homes where parents are ill or alcoholic. Four children come from homes in which a foreign language is spoken; in two of these there is an actual cultural rejection of the mores and language of the majority culture. These problems are by no means equally distributed—many of them will spiral. For example, a dull child with serious health problems comes from a home in which both parents are alcoholic.

Joyce recognizes all of these differences. She knows that each child is a custom job and brings his family, the impact of his neighborhood, and his background of experience to school with him every day.

Day-by-Day Living in School

How can Joyce translate this basic principle of democracy—respect for the value of individual personalities—into day-by-day practice in school for this widely divergent group which represents normal expectancy in any classroom? She knows that although each child is different, every child has common needs. In meeting these common needs, Joyce will be most likely to meet the individual needs of her pupils. Educators, generally, accept a classification which includes the same specific needs:

- A sense of belonging, of being wanted
- Love and affection
- Achievement and recognition
- Emotional security
- Freedom from fear
- Freedom from intense feelings of guilt
- Self-respect

- Driving purposes
- Understanding of the world in which they live

Although Joyce realizes that the school cannot meet all these needs, she does not feel too frustrated. Under the limitations imposed by mass education, she knows that she cannot meet every need of every child. Perfection lies outside of the realm of reality, but she does know that many things can be done to meet a great many of the different needs of the children entrusted to her care.

Joyce knows that families have a profound influence on children, that the home is the primary teacher, but she recognizes the responsibility of the school to work with individual parents and groups of parents to build understanding of the developmental needs of children. Joyce sees the magnitude and the social significance of her work. Her professional education has led her to an acceptance of scientific evidence on how children learn. She thinks of the experiences the school provides in terms of their value in stimulating these natural drives to learning.

Joyce knows that every child has these drives to learning:

- To be physically active
- To satisfy his curiosity
- To share and communicate
- To manipulate and construct
- To recreate life about him through dramatic play
- To express himself esthetically

Joyce uses these six drives to learning in every experience she anticipates and provides for her pupils. She recognizes as her first task the creation of a stimulating physical and social classroom environment rich in wholesome challenges to social living and learning. She aims at making her classroom a genuine labor-

atory for democratic social living. Joyce asks herself: What can I put in the environment to stimulate the curiosity of these children? What can I provide which will make the children wish to share and communicate with one another? What materials will stimulate them to manipulate and construct? What materials will make them wish to engage in dramatic play? How can I provide a variety of means through which these children can satisfy their desire for esthetic expression? Education is the result of the interaction of the learner with his environment. So, Joyce thinks that a lush environment will stimulate the highest degree of interaction.

Of course, Joyce knows that the social environment is equally important—perhaps even more important—than the physical environment the classroom provides. The teacher is the most important person in the social environment because she creates the climate in which learning takes place. If the teacher is a socially-sensitive person with a genuine affection for children, she can create with her own personality the social climate conducive to learning. Such a teacher sees that no child in her class feels rejected or unwanted. She provides the opportunity for children to interact with the other children; she utilizes dramatic play and dramatization, group planning and discussion, committees working on large and small projects.

Joyce is not afraid to work with her principal and other members of the administrative staff to secure the environment in which effective learning takes place. She has implicit confidence in the mandate which says: "Ask, and ye shall receive." She knows that a good environment requires sufficient space, flexible seating and working arrangements; a wide variety of materials of instruction including books with a range

of reading difficulty; wood, tools, workbenches; cloth and materials for costumes; toys; paint and easels; clay; large wrapping paper for maps and murals and scores of other items essential for effective teaching.

Joyce knows that learning is not limited to the classroom. She plans to use the resources of the community. First-hand experiences are the best way to learn, so study trips will be planned as needed. The people of the community will be invited in to the school to share their knowledge or their skill with the children. Joyce knows that members of the community respond readily to invitations to help induct children into the world of adults through shared experience.

How can the principal in Joyce's school know whether Joyce and her colleagues are really translating these basic principles of democracy into the day-by-day living with their groups? In truly democratic school situations, we find:

Children are carrying on activities and doing work which interests them because it forwards their purposes and makes living richer for them. Child interest is an important criterion for evaluating any teaching-learning situation because interest is evidence of awakening power.

Children are engaging in a variety of different activities under the guidance of a teacher who understands the individual differences represented in the group. The traditional recitation or study period with every child doing the same thing at the same time has disappeared in schools endeavoring to adjust instruction to individual children.

Children have opportunity to make choices. Group planning for work periods, for committee projects, for dramatic play provide opportunity for learning to make sound choices. The process of learning to make wise choices is one of the most important lessons the school can teach.

Each child is being treated with consideration and respect by his teacher and by his

classmates. Recognition of the sanctity of human personality demands that every child be well treated in our schools. The mental health of our country is jeopardized unless every child's self-respect is protected. One in every ten of our population actually breaks under the tensions and pressures of modern life and becomes life's psychiatric failure. Even more people are at odds with themselves and their environment and so lead half lives. School is one place where we can deal with these problems before they become impossible to solve. Schools can become more concerned with the preventive angle of this problem of mental health; this means more concern with current school practices that induce tensions in children.

Finally, children are learning to work in groups and use group processes. Social values are being taught; children are learning to contribute to the group; and the group is learning to accept and respect each child's contribution. Individuals are respected for their contribution regardless of differences in color, national background, social or economic status.

If Joyce's principal accepts the democratic way of life to live by in his heart, he will evaluate her work, then, in terms of (1) the degree of interest the children manifest in their work; (2) the degree of adaptation of school experiences to individual differences; (3) the opportunity afforded for children to participate in planning and to learn to make wise choices; (4) the respect accorded each child in the class group and (5) the opportunity children have to work in groups and learn the social tools and techniques for effective group action.

No one could underestimate the magnitude of the task of helping children to become democratic persons. Teachers generally face the reality of meeting widely different human needs. No group in our society shows greater willingness to accept responsibility. Our great strength and resource in maintaining the democratic faith are the devoted teachers in the schools of America.

Cues for Observing Children's Behavior

Teachers and parents, as well as clinicians and research workers, can use observations as a means of understanding children. Techniques for the observer have been given by Edith M. Dowley, director, Stanford Village Nursery School and assistant professor of psychology, Stanford University, California.

RESEARCH AND CLINICAL STUDIES HAVE changed our ways of looking at children in recent years. The developmental studies of Gesell and others, which attempted to establish behavior norms, focused our attention for a time on the child in relation to his age group. The new emphasis on the unique personality of each individual child and the idiomatic nature of his behavior has convinced us of the necessity for thinking of children as individuals, unbiased by popular clichés or by generalizations about age, sex, or family background. The assumption that everything a child does has meaning, that each word, each gesture, each action has significance peculiar only to him, has challenged us to watch for clues to the workings of his inner private world. The further assumption that the child expresses himself in many ways—by his actions, by the way he uses his body, through his dramatic play, in his choice and use of materials, as well as through his spoken language—has given us some hints of what to look for when observing him.

The use of observation as a means of understanding children is not limited to clinicians and research workers. It can be and is increasingly helpful to parents and teachers as well.

Anyone can observe child behavior

and find it a rewarding experience. As greater skills in observing are developed, however, keener sensitivity is acquired and the observer finds it more and more possible to identify with the child, to record his behavior fully and vividly, and to interpret the language of his actions so that it has meaning. Everyone who observes children will want to do it in his own way, and it is well that he should develop his own techniques for observing and recording behavior. The following paragraphs will present some specific suggestions which observers have found helpful in the past.

Cues for Observers

The importance of remaining inconspicuous is stressed in the training of observers. As long as the child is unaware of being watched, he is free to behave naturally and in his own way. Children who are aware of being observed are bound to behave with some degree of self-consciousness which results in shyness, embarrassment, frustration, or showing off. It is wise to avoid interacting with the children in any way. If a child speaks to the observer it is usually possible to nod, smile, or answer briefly and initiate no further conversation. In situations where a child might be in danger of getting hurt, an observer would step in only if the adult responsible for him could not be called immediately. What we really want to see when observing a child is what he is like regardless of our presence.

The value of an observation depends largely on its accuracy. It is important to give attention to such details as know-

ing first and last names of all the children and identifying them correctly, calling the materials and equipment by their recognizable names, and timing the duration of the child's activities. It is helpful to record in five-minute intervals whenever this is appropriate or possible, indicating the time in the margin of the page every five minutes. The observer should also date and sign each day's observations for future usefulness.

A full dynamic and accurate report of the child or children in the situation is the purpose of the observation record. To do that the observer will need to take complete note of everything a child says and does, everything that is said or done to him, and every gesture, facial expression, or movement he makes that might express his feelings about the situation. This necessitates some form of abbreviated note-taking or shorthand for the continuous, rapid recording required. These notes should be re-written in full and descriptive detail as soon as possible after the observations are made. It is startling to discover how soon observation notes can grow cold and lose the vivid aliveness they had when fresh.

The observer must overcome his biases and feel in sympathy with the child he is observing. How we look at children is largely determined by our personal and cultural prejudices and by the kinds of childhood experiences we had.

Ricky was such a sweet little boy when he first came to school. He spoke so nicely, and sat quietly at the art corner table really making things. Now he is just as naughty as some of the other boys.

Ricky's observer obviously found it more comfortable to observe him when he fit into her idea of what a little boy should be like: sweet, quiet, polite, and conforming. When his behavior changed it was difficult for her to accept him. The observation tells more about her

feelings than it does about Ricky. It is always easy to paint a bright attractive picture of a child when we feel warmly toward him and admire him. Since the reason for observing children is to increase our understanding of them, it is important that we learn to look at the child and his behavior with an open mind that is interested and accepting, rather than judgmental or condemnatory.

Prejudice also determines what we expect of children, not only in behavior but also in achievement. We may have preconceived notions about what children of a given age should be able to do and frequently judge the end results of their efforts without considering the processes which to the child may be far more significant than the finished product. The paintings of little children are a good illustration of this. The adult who saw only the solid blackness of Jeff's painting could scarcely know or appreciate the complex design he so carefully planned and worked out at the easel:

He dips his brush in purple paint and holding it very securely in his left hand makes careful lines. (This is not his usual, free scrubbing stroke.) During the painting he changes hands occasionally, and while he paints with one, the other hand is held stiffly, slightly out from his body, his fingers separated and held tensely in one position. Taking yellow paint now, he starts on another part of the paper, leaving his purple figures untouched, and draws carefully though more freely than before with the yellow making horizontal lines, and vertical spirals. After only a few of these yellow strokes, he turns from the paper and begins making stabbing thrusts with the brush at the sides of the easel, looking around as if to see if anyone is watching him. Now he dips his brush in black paint, and starting at the top of the paper, begins to cover his whole painting with a thick coat of black.

Observing on Three Levels

• Observations of children can be made on three levels. The first level

reports exactly what the child *does* and it usually focuses on his gross motor behavior or specific manipulatory activity.

11:20 Lynn went over to the slide. She climbed up the ladder and slid down. She jumped off at the bottom and ran around to the ladder, climbed it again and again slid down. She did this five times and was starting up the sixth time when she saw her father who had come to call for her. She called to him as she slid down again, then again. When her mother came she ran to her and they all went home together at 11:30.

Recording on this level has value because it tells us how this child spent her time and how long an activity might be expected to hold interest. It could also tell us what kinds of activities Lynn enjoys provided we have many other records telling of her similar choices of materials or equipment. These records, however, are not complete or detailed enough. This might be an observation of hundreds of other children in similar surroundings. We need to have more details about the situation and more of the child's idiomatic expression, gesture, or movement if we are to understand children and know what they are telling us about themselves.

- The second level of observation, then, expresses the child's feelings about what he does. It reports the quality of his behavior and the *how* of what he does. The task of the observer on this level is to record fully and vividly, and not only reconstruct the situation as he saw it, but as the child lived it and felt it.

The following observation is of Lynn in the same situation, made by a different recorder.

11:20 Looking around, Lynn spotted the slide. Away she skipped to it. Up the ladder she climbed, then down the ladder she swooped. Giggling and jumping she went, her long-bobbed hair rising and falling as she bounced up and down on her high-shoed feet.

Up the ladder, almost stumbling in her eagerness she went, then down she swooped again. Up the ladder, down the slide Lynn went again and again, laughing and humming, sometimes mumbling soft unintelligible sounds as she did so. Soon her father came. When she saw him her laughing face was momentarily frowning. She narrowed her eyelids to slits and her lips tightened slightly. "I'll still go up the slide, Daddy," she called. Then she saw her mother who was talking to the teacher. "My mother's here! My mother's here," she sang gaily as down the slide she went and ran to her mother, hugging her gently around her knees. With her mother and daddy each holding one of her hands she walked slowly home between them.

Good observation of human behavior is at once the most exact kind of reporting and the most exact expression of feelings. This requires not only getting on paper the actual words the child says or the obvious actions he performs, but the more subtle characteristics of facial and postural expression by which he reveals his pleasure, dissatisfaction, fear, yearning, or inadequacy in relation to the events taking place.

Janie, notices that her shoe lace is untied on her right shoe. She seats herself carefully on the edge of the sandbox and after shifting her weight slightly to be more comfortable she sets about the difficult task of tying her shoestring. First she takes off her shoe and empties the sand and then she attempts to get it back on her foot. At first it is hard for her and she frets and wrinkles her forehead. She sucks her lower lip in and out and her countenance wears an impatient frown. She raises her eyes for a moment now and then gazing all around the yard. A train passes by in the distance and she turns her head to watch it. A few more tugs on the shoe, one, two, three, and she stops to watch Lynn who is playing beside her. Another try at the back of the shoe and she has it on.

Lynn who is delighted with her own play unintentionally throws some sand up into the air and some of it lands in Janie's hair. Janie does not seem angry or upset by this as she automatically brushes it off with her hand. She returns to the task of shoe-tying. Grasping an end of the lace in each hand she tugs away

and then stamps her foot up and down looking both impatient and disgusted. She crosses her hands to cross the laces and rubs them vigorously one against the other. Her mouth droops and she looks most unhappy. Then she tries something new. Instead of trying to loop the laces, she threads one side of the lace around and around through the eyelets of her shoe. Her fingers move steadily and quickly. After five minutes of this she stops and again her mouth droops at the corners and her eyes fill with tears. Slowly she gets to her feet and she stands quietly watching Lynn until Topper suddenly runs between her and the sandbox. She steps back with a jerk but as he keeps on going she returns to the edge of the sandbox and unwinds the laces and tries again to tie them. Finally she gives up and seeing Mrs. T., walks over to her and with shoulders tensely hunched forward, stands stiffly in front of her. She thrusts her hands into her pockets and waits for Mrs. T. to look at her. At last she puts her foot out in front of her and in a soft but long-suffering tone of voice says, "Will you tie this for me?"

Some people insist that observations must be completely objective. By this they usually mean that we should record only what we see or hear, without inference or qualification. It is true that most of our observations are based on what we can take in through our eyes and ears. Sights, however, can by themselves lead us into error; consider for example, a day-dreaming child who presents the picture of rapt attention. Sounds too can be confusing; frequently the tone of voice used even by a small child may completely belie his feelings. The purpose of an observation is to capture and communicate the relations within the integration of sense perceptions. An observation which integrates all that can be captured of a situation and communicates it fully and vividly can be equally useful to those who insist on complete objectivity and those who favor a more dynamic approach.

- The first two levels of observation are concerned with communication both

objective and effective. The third level adds a personal touch of the observer by inclusion of his impressions and interpretations of the behavior he has observed. Insofar as possible the observer will report so skillfully and completely that the facts speak for themselves.

John ran through the door of the kindergarten at top speed, knocking Mary down as he collided with her on her way outside. Without stopping he dashed toward the group sitting around the piano. Seeing an empty chair in the center of the group, he made his way to it, stepping on Bob's foot in his haste. Bob struck him and John picked up a nearby drum stick and hit him a resounding crack on the shins. Then picking up the drum he beat it with such violence that its taut covering burst.

However, in making it perfectly clear how the observer saw the child, he may need to draw attention to the quality of the child's performance and his relation to the object of his interest.

As he watched the rats, the first obvious change of expression came over Allen's face. His eyebrows were elevated slightly and his lips parted. A fleeting expression, and then he laughed aloud. (The queer thing was that the change of expression and the laugh did not seem to be connected. I felt as if I were watching a puppet show and some one had forgotten to pull the right string.)

This inclusion of observer's impressions gives the reader the opportunity of sitting in the spectator's seat and seeing this child long after the situation has passed. Without her impression it might have been easy to misinterpret the meaning of Allen's laughter. In the following episode some explanation of Sue's rejection is needed.

Sue, Beth, and Nan were playing together in the music room. "Put your chair in a line with our chairs," Beth invited Sue. "Yes, I will," Sue said, but before she could do so, Nan pulled her chair away saying, "I'll not let you sit with me." Sue, pulling her chair said, "Yes, you will." Nan stamped her foot and said angrily, "No, I don't want to sit next to you," and she pulled her chair to the farther-

est corner, next to the wall, leaving Sue no chance to get any nearer. Beth as usual followed Nan and the two sat together, leaving Sue alone in the middle of the room.

This attitude of the other children might in a way explain why Sue does not interact with the other children as much as she should. On the other hand, the attitude of the other children might be due to the fact that often Sue would not share her things, nor does she go out of her way to play with the others. Could it be that she is afraid of being hurt by others or not wanted by them that makes her give up so easily and go off to play by herself?

The addition of the second paragraph by the observer serves to make us aware that in her previous observations of Sue she has noticed how much Sue plays alone and has been concerned about this. In this situation she begins to draw some conclusions and ventures some hypotheses concerning her behavior. This requires sensitivity on the part of the recorder and sharpens her awareness of what to watch for in the future to test her hunches.

Sherry's observer, after watching her dramatic play for several weeks, interpreted its meaning as the result of the following episode.

"Cynthia, you're the baby. You come right home and take off that hat this minute," demanded Sherry. She grabbed Cynthia's hand and slapped it viciously—as a parent might slap a disobedient child. Cynthia was now crying helplessly so that the teacher had to come and rescue her.

This episode gave me a clue to some of Sherry's behavior of the past few weeks. I believe that she has quite a bit of hostility stored up and that she has discovered by taking the mother role in house play she is able to dominate, direct, rule, and even punish other children with impunity—as long as she is playing the mother. I don't know what role her baby brother plays in this behavior, but it would be interesting to watch her actions toward him.

Without this interpretation of Sherry's behavior we might miss an important opportunity for understanding this child.

Even if the interpretation might not be a correct one, it can always be checked against past and future observational evidence. Hypotheses such as these are the bases for the discovery of new meanings of behavior and new ways of helping children.

Human behavior is not static, but dynamic. The child is constantly moving, growing, and changing. From what we know about him at present, his behavior is usually unpredictable and often mysterious. The task of the observer is to discover more clues to the child's purposes and feelings and more meaning to his behavior, so he can tap the inner workings of his mind. As parents and teachers practice the observational arts and grow in skill and sensitivity in exploring the child's world and its meaning, they will become so sensitized to the purposing, feeling child that they will find themselves automatically in tune with him.

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A face is something to have on the front of your head

Illustrations by Maurice Sendak for "A Hole Is to Dig," (Ruth Krauss) courtesy Harper

Establishing Rapport

an effort to understand children

Ordinary classroom activities can reveal a pattern of values (what is important to each child) if the teacher knows how to interpret. Bill Bennett is supervisor of Trainees, Intensive Program for College Graduates, Teachers College of Connecticut, New Britain.

PETER SAT AT THE END OF THE SEMI-circle reading group. He looked at his book, then away, shifted his position—wiggled. Everytime a child stumbled on a word, he called it out. The teacher tried in a “nice” way to cope with the situation. He had been “invited” to help the teacher with a slower reading group. Both Peter and the teacher were less than satisfied with the experience. Finally, in exasperation, he closed his book, crossed his legs, and with a heavy sigh said, “Honestly, the way these kids read! Why don’t you let me read it and get it over.”

This teacher had made a well-intended but perfunctory effort to establish rapport (1) between Peter and herself by showing a need for his help and a confidence that he could furnish it, and (2) between Peter and the group by showing him and the group that he had something to contribute to them—or as we say, “find his place in the group.” The teacher’s mistake stemmed from the naive assumption that she knew Peter’s “type” and, accordingly, what he needed.

Peter was known to all in the school as a difficult case. In the classroom he was the itinerant catalyst. The facts of his home background, his record in two previous grades were common knowledge. The school did not have a guidance staff, but if it had, this teacher would have to know more than is supplied through personality tests, personal data

sheets, cumulative records—as important as all of these are. What was required involved more than the psychologist or guidance counselor can supply, although that is important.

What she needed to know was how Peter felt about the weaknesses of others and his ideas on how his own capacities should be utilized. In order to help him through all the situations where her help is needed, she needs to understand how Peter relates the subject matter and experiences—content and procedures—of the instructional program, one by one, to his inner life.

Without presuming to be a *guidance expert*, the teacher must be expert at guiding the experiences of each child within the classroom to the satisfaction of his own peculiar needs. This cannot be done by the expedient of categorizing children on the basis of overt behavioral patterns, home background, and rate of learning in prescribed areas; and then attempting to apply blanket procedures to all within a given category. Such an approach negates in a measure the actual regard for the individual, saying in effect that where there are any differences, the differences are alike.

The teacher is in an advantageous position to secure the knowledge needed if he is able to relate the aim of individual growth to the curriculum through the application of the techniques of counseling. With an adequate understand-

ing of the techniques of counseling, he may use instructional situations to gain data of value in an attempt to understand the individuals of his class as unique personalities. Of even more importance, he may help to structure these situations so that the individual gains the maximum of insights into his own personality. (Self-understanding and acceptance is an ultimate condition of rapport between individuals. This understanding need not be verbalized, but must be felt.)

Language Facilitates Rapport

The individual's introspective reports frequently give clues to the meaning of his observed behavior. The preparation of them challenges him to come to grips with his inner life. In the elementary school the development of language facility looms large in importance. In this area alone there are myriad opportunities for the individual to work out an acceptable relationship among elements in his pattern of living and to communicate them to the teacher skilled in interpretation of this communication.

A sixth grade with which I worked presented many problems in interpersonal relations and group control. Most of the children had foreign backgrounds and experienced difficulty with written language. The two things seemed to be related in producing an apathy toward school work in spite of attempts to challenge them in activities ordinarily interesting at this level. Then we began a project of writing a daily diary. At the outset this was no more than a daily schedule, restricted to schooltime activities. Two purposes were clear: to account for the use of school time, and to improve in language. The diary was prepared as the first activity of the day and covered the previous day. Papers were turned in to the teacher. I checked them for language usage only, not cor-

recting errors but making suggestions for general improvement. Later, during language period, skills for which need had been shown were drilled with the view to improving tomorrow's writing. As the project continued, many children became engrossed in their improved ability with language—even asking to work on the diaries in the evening at home.

A way of lengthening the diary had to be found. The experience so far had established a degree of rapport in that the teacher was now something of an "insider" on what they did and why. This made it easier to stretch the account to cover out-of-school activities—but only as they wanted to; no attempt was made to get more information than they wished to divulge. New elements of language were considered as means of more adequate expression. As they became more proficient, they told a great deal more about their activities, why they did them, what they intended, and how they evaluated them. Over a period of time it was possible to pick out patterns of values in the items selected, the importance attached to certain types of experiences, the necessity for explaining or apologizing, and the information given or withheld.

As the children became more accustomed to writing about themselves, certain matters in the content of the diary were discussed with each individual, the way he was using his time, opportunities he was neglecting, or how a difficulty might have been avoided. For many, their own lives seemed to assume new importance and they were less interested in directing others—some problems of control disappeared and new interests developed.

Variations of the diary adaptable to different grade levels include:

Daily schedule, with activities recorded without comment. It is useful in check-

ing how well one carries out plans, and reveals a pattern of self-direction or whimsy. It may show wherein the individual needs help in accomplishing certain tasks, or a pattern of affinities or aversions. Beginning in second grade it may be used as a reading vehicle by having children copy from the daily program written on the chalkboard or a chart the activities accomplished. In the middle grades it may be structured to practice outlining.

Controlled diary. Pattern of specific aspects of personality may be revealed in daily records—practicing certain language skills—of such things as “What Made Me Laugh Today,” or “If I Had It to Do Over.”

The autobiography is one of the most revealing of all introspective reports, but its preparation requires the most skillful handling. Because it is such a vital document, anything called an autobiography should not be used for purposes of routine information. This may block its usefulness later. A comprehensive autobiography should not be undertaken until the individual is sufficiently adept at expressing feelings, emotions, and concepts in words and can utilize the experience toward self-understanding.

However, the skillful teacher can obtain material for a cumulative autobiography by means of a series of compositions on various aspects of personal history, such as, “Places I Have Seen,” “Good Times I Have Had.” Ordinarily, these compositions may be secured without any feeling that privacy is being invaded or the teacher is getting too “nosey.” This, of course, depends on the way in which the reports are invited and received, which is itself an aspect of establishing rapport. Children will enter into them heartily if they are used as a means of attaching importance to what they have done.

Revealing Projective Techniques

Many teachers are aware that individuals reveal much about themselves through projective techniques, notably finger painting. However, a few examples illustrate the possibilities of applying the principle of projection to a variety of ordinary instructional situations.

In the primary grades valid use can be made of discussing pictures. Careful selection of pictures to include persons or things or situations for which the child might have strong feelings can furnish valuable insights into how he regards these aspects of life. In developing sight vocabulary, select a list of words that children may recognize from signs, billboards, newspapers, cartoons, and television. Ask them to tell where they have seen the word. This gives clues to how observant each one is, what attracts their attention, and how meaningful experiences are to them.

The individual betrays insights into his outlook on life through thematic apperception in pictures. Using pictures that are somewhat vague as to time, place, and action, yet presenting situations and persons with which the individual may recognize an acquaintance, he writes or tells a story of what he thinks it means. In doing this he projects his concerns and expectations. From a sufficient number of these involving comparable persons or situations (adults, adults-children, peers, home, school, play) a



**Eye brows are to
go over your eyes**

Illustrations by Maurice Sendak for “A Hole Is to Dig,”

pattern or theme of apperception can be discerned.

Much of the instruction in the elementary school involves dramatic play and dramatization in which children portray persons other than themselves. The socio-drama provides an opportunity for children to give their version of a familiar social situation while practicing creative language.

In a fifth grade the following situation was carried out as a socio-drama in connection with a study of conversation in a group:

"Two boys, accompanied by their sisters, stopped on their way from school for a game of marbles. An incident occurred resulting in a fight between the boys. They reported it to their respective parents who got together to settle it. What happened to cause the fight, and what did the parents do about it?"

Three groups of characters were chosen among volunteers for the parts. Those in each group got together for a few minutes to plan the action and dialogue. Then the groups in turn presented their dramas. A general discussion followed in which the children compared the various "solutions" and weighed the relative merits of each. During the presentations it was enlightening to see the different portrayals of parents' role, for example.

The first few experiences with socio-drama require some planning on the part of the participants. All children are not ready for the spontaneous movement of

action that is required in unplanned presentations. However, planned presentations may show strong influence on the part of certain dominating members and characterizations thus may represent their concepts rather than those of the "actors." On the other hand, this provides an opportunity to observe the multiple attitudes of a particular person by giving that one responsibility for structuring the action and dialogue of all other players.

Situations for valid socio-drama must be such that participants can create the roles out of their own perceptions, otherwise the action may be sheer random activity.

The inexperienced teacher should be careful that intended socio-dramas do not, in fact, become psycho-dramas without the supporting atmosphere that is demanded for such an experience. This may occur if the individual participates in the drama as himself, rather than as someone else. Care should be exercised to assign no one to a role in which he is likely to recognize himself. Psycho-dramas should be handled by experts only.

These illustrations indicate a few of the opportunities that teachers have at their disposal for adding to their understanding of the children in their classrooms. The teacher with a genuine interest in the positive growth and development of children will begin with these and find others.

As the pattern of each maturing personality becomes manifest through the cross-checking of the insights gained here and elsewhere, the teacher will be able to show in the manner of handling each child in relation to his school experiences an attitude which the child recognizes as helpful. When that has transpired, rapport will have been ultimately established.

Children are to love



(Ruth Krauss) courtesy Harper



ACEI 1954 Study

April 18-23

St. Paul, Minnesota

*Theme: Effective Education
for All Children*

Pictures shown here are of children from the schools of St. Paul and Minneapolis. School visiting is one of the features of the 1954 ACEI Study Conference. There will also be general meetings, consultation hours, and interest-discussion groups.



Conference



What Are Children Really Saying?

Today children should not only be heard—but listened to! What they say, how they say it, and why are important clues in understanding each child better. Evelyn D. Adlerblum is assistant professor of education, New York University, New York City.

EVERY DAY, IN OUR SCHOOLS, CHILDREN tell us through a blending of words and actions how they feel about themselves and what they understand of the world around them. A child's desire to express and to communicate is strong. From the first experimental savoring of sounds and words with which he explores the new physical world, to the way he goes on to develop fuller, more precise, and socially practical ways of communicating with others, we see the unfolding of his life story. The kinds of information and values he has, how he relates to other people, the special quality of his imagination, and his attitudes toward new experiences are facets of him that show themselves naturally, at any one stage, if the teacher observes and if the school allows them to be seen.

We are currently developing a stock of valuable guidance tools for learning more about children: cumulative records, psychometric tests, sampling recordings, informal and projective techniques. The most valuable of all is still the knowledge that a skillful teacher may gather from looking and listening to the children as they work and live together. The better his knowledge of child development, the sounder is his grasp of what he may generally expect of the group. Beyond that, he will try to see each of the children

as an individual whose behavior bears the personal stamp of his experiences and uniqueness.

Since a child is all-of-a-piece wherever he is, a teacher can expect him to show the language, social behavior, and life values that are natural for his family and the way they live in their community. For example, a child may reflect his family's economic and educational "good living" in fluent, well-assembled speech. Another child of a home deprived of education and money may bring to school the rough evidences of deprivation in impoverished language, social tools, and dress.

Socio-economic Influences

Roy was a rough-and-tough child who fought excessively with children. He came from a deprived home where his father often was unemployed and there were many children. Having no toys at home, he wanted everything in school for himself. If a child had a toy car, he would say, "Gimme," and try to take it. "Git outta here. Go on. I want it. Beat it!" he persisted as the other child held on. Then came tears and trouble. He had few words or social techniques for handling frustration.

How different was the reaction of Mark in the same group. Mark was the child of professional workers. He came up to the teacher saying, "I'm having a difficult time finding something to do. I want everything others have. I want it real badly. But, I don't want anyone else, no children. They get in my way. I don't want anyone to help me." While both boys showed much the same feeling, the

differences in social mores and expression were plain.

Roy's immaturity in social relations was only a part of what his teacher came to understand of this "whole child." She also saw his complete responsibility for any job he undertook at school.

She will probably never forget the day she gave what seemed to be a carefully planned lesson on "the importance of a healthful, balanced breakfast" which culminated in the children telling her what they ate for breakfast. Not so with Roy. He refused to talk. Later in the day he told her why, "I didn't want to. Sometimes I don't have no breakfast and sometimes, like today, I have a roll and coffee. That's all; no fruit, no milk. And that's why I don't want to say."

Family Living Is Important

The way a child feels about his place in his family is not necessarily related to its financial or educational quality. There are children from homes of low socio-economic status who are emotionally strong and well integrated. There are others from homes that seem to offer all the props of good living whose growth is weak and unsteady. Every child has the need to feel parental love, to try himself out, to succeed, and to make mistakes. In every child's life these needs are met differently and some show more satisfaction than others.

Jim and Carl are both bright boys, according to tests. Jim is comfortable with people and materials. Pleasant and full of ideas, he enjoys what he does, and children enjoy him. Carl wants to be like him, but cannot. He is considered bossy and nagging. When the children will not do as he says, he scolds and fights. Jim's parents thoroughly enjoy their children, even through their mischief and the unevenness of everyday living. Carl's parents, on the other hand, have set high

standards for him, some hard to meet. They push him toward these through discussions and lectures. He is left with heavy feelings of guilt that he unconsciously works off on other children in distasteful ways he himself cannot understand.

Similarly, the high achievement and responsible behavior Tom's parents expected seemed only to make him increasingly resistant and unhappy. One day his teacher had read a story about a cat who lovingly feeds and washes her kittens. When it was over, Tom quietly called his teacher aside, "Please write a letter for me right away. Please. Say, 'Dear Mother, I want to tell you that I love you. I love Father too, even though I do not always act that way.'"

Family concerns over success and competition often show in children. The source of Betty's struggle was her sister. Her mother said, "Betty worships her older sister. She always tries to keep up with her," and it was true. Betty called the first grade "a baby class, like the kindergarten." She would not draw or paint, "I can't make it good enough." Instead of changing class activities with the other youngsters she hung back, "When I start something, I want to finish it. My sister always does."

Barry had a large vocabulary and was well-informed, but children saw him only as a strange child whose physical skills were underdeveloped and who was timorous. His parents' anxiety over his health was apparent. Sometimes he said, "I won't take my leggings off because I think I have a little cold. Anyway, I'm sweating today and it's good to sweat when you have a cold." "That whistle has germs on it. He's going to catch someone else's germs." What she saw led the teacher to talk with Barry's parents. She also taught him to work with his body to carry and pour water for plants, and to

travel about the school on jobs. With increasing skill, he acquired more confidence and there was less talk of germs and colds.

Consider Individual Traits

It is difficult to decide whether nature or nurture has the most influence on what the child will become. Perhaps it is not so important that we differentiate between the nature and the nurture in a child as long as we allow for the reality that there are individual differences. Looking at children, a teacher notes marked differences among them, differences of tempo of thought, of speech, and movement. One child may be mercurial and quick to take hold. Yet another who is undramatically slow may be steadier in everything he does.

As we listen to the discussion of children in the primary grades, we find it is usually direct and personal. It is the way they re-live and incorporate their experiences, making them a part of themselves. At a lunch table in the school lunchroom, there is honest talk of children, "I'm fed up with the school lunches. Soup comes out of my ears, eyes, and nose." Another says, "She looked at *his* painting, just *his* painting" and got a comment, "Yeah, but it was good—like a real sky."

Occasionally a child's wonder at living is breath-taking, "That picture came out of my brain. Yet my brain doesn't look anything at all like that. So how could it be there?" Another child perceives values in his own unique way, "Maybe Freddy is afraid. Maybe he is a coward. But he has a nice soft voice. I like it. Let's let him play, huh fellows?"

A child tells us about himself only partly through what he says. Often it is what he represses and never says which makes us think. The lift of a child's head,

the sureness or hesitancy with which he moves and works, the characteristic expression of satisfaction or sadness which rests on his face speak also. Is the usual tone of his voice relaxed and strong, tense, timid, or whining? Many things make a personal pattern. What the teacher notes of this pattern needs to be looked at against the backdrop of the child's history, his environment, and his productive output. From there the teacher may go on to individuate planning for this child both in school and in the way he works with the parents.

Children show themselves most genuinely in an environment that respects their thoughts and actions, stripping them of the need to be defensive and to mask their true feelings. The atmosphere of the classroom and of the school in general must therefore offer children the feeling that normal living and expression is in order. This calls for the kind of curricular programming that sets up opportunities for a variety of large and small group living experiences. It also indicates that such gathering places as the lunchroom and playground should encourage normal social living.

The importance of the child-teacher relationship is self-evident. All of us talk most freely with people whom we trust and of whom we are not afraid. This is especially true of children who are feeling their way in a world ruled by adults. Often, out of their need to feel accepted by the adults closest to them, they learn to say what these adults want to hear—rather than what they feel most deeply. It follows then that a teacher who wants to hear what children think must earn their regard as a friend who generally understands how children feel. Beyond that, it requires that he be that kind of rare adult who also listens to what children have to say.

Locating Children With Emotional Problems

How do we differentiate between normal behavior of a child in a group and what may be an emotional problem? Walter Barbe, associate professor and director, Junior League Reading Center, University of Chattanooga, Tennessee, makes some suggestions for recognizing symptoms.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS ARE CONSTANTLY being told that they must be aware of the emotional problems of their pupils, but how can the teacher know which children have emotional problems? If every child who misbehaves is labeled maladjusted, there will probably be few children who do not carry such a label. Many of the children who never misbehave are probably the very ones for whom the label would properly apply.

Just as a child has curly hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion, so also may the child's emotional make-up be described. The emotional make-up is certainly not as obvious, but it is present, nevertheless, and perhaps far more important.

Various terms are used to describe a child's adjustments. The two terms, "personality" and "emotional adjustment," are synonymous. Generally speaking, the emotional make-up of the child is concerned with how well he has adjusted to life situations both at home and at school. It must be recognized that every child will have different situations to which he must adjust. When the child is unable to adjust to any particular one of these situations, and reacts to it by either becoming aggressive or withdrawn in other situations, he is then said to have an emotional problem.

The teacher is in the best position to

identify children with emotional problems. He is not only with the child a large part of each day, but he also is able to observe the child more objectively than the parent. Also, the teacher has a group of children of approximately the same age with whom he can compare each child. This is, in a sense, a norm by which he may judge normal behavior and normal adjustment.

If the teacher is to locate emotional problems by means of observation, he should know specifically what problems for which to look. Any type of observed behavior, to be considered important, should be consistent. Merely the occurrence of one outburst from Johnny is not sufficient reason to label him socially maladjusted. The children in the classroom quickly forget the isolated instances of misbehavior, for they accept the fact that an occasional outlet for our emotions is essential to good mental health. The most important aspect, therefore, is that the behavior be consistent, and that it is not merely a child's way of learning to adjust by trial and error.

There are two distinct types of behavior which may be indicative of emotional maladjustments in children. Neither is more or less important than the other. For very obvious reasons, the outward type of behavior, aggressive-ness, will attract more attention than the

retiring type of behavior. In the classroom where 35 to 40 children must be taken care of, the child who sits back and is no trouble may be considered a model child. Teachers are coming to realize that this child, just as the aggressive child also may be having emotional problems. While rebellion is not to be encouraged, it is only a natural stage in the development of all children to either try their ability at being important or to defy authority at least occasionally. When too many children have such natural urges at one time, the teacher feels that he has had a most trying day. But if the children were not to express their freedom occasionally, it would be a very dull existence, much more difficult than the way things are at present.

What Is Aggressive Behavior?

In attempting to determine the extent of aggressive behavior which should be considered serious, a teacher can ask the following questions about a child:

- Does he consistently lie, even when the truth would sometimes do just as well?
- Does he cheat even when he doesn't need to merely for the sake of cheating?
- Does he steal, or report things of his own to be stolen when they are not?
- Is he intentionally destructive?
- Is he cruel?
- Does he consistently bully younger children?
- In his relations with adults, is he arrogant and defiant?
- Does he frequently have temper tantrums?

An affirmative answer to one of these does not necessarily imply that the child has an emotional problem, but it is indication that he is not satisfactorily adjusting to the group. An affirmative answer to several of these indicates a child who needs help.

All lying is not an indication of emotional maladjustment. But it may be a symptom if the child believes that it is

better not to tell the truth than to face reality. Cheating and stealing may be attempts to compensate for inability or inequality in other ways. Recognized early, these are not major problems and the classroom teacher can adequately provide for this child. If it is a pattern which is once started and persists throughout school, it becomes a serious problem. Destructiveness is not a natural trait in children. They may be careless, but intentionally destroying property, whether it belongs to them or not, is an indication of aggressiveness which needs to be recognized. Merely telling the child to stop or punishing him will do nothing to correct a basically serious problem.

Even though it is sometimes said that children are cruel, they are not unless we, as adults, make them believe that this is an acceptable method of adjustment. Sometimes a child may be cruel merely because he does not understand. When told that his actions are unkind and cruel, he will not persist in them. Bullying, another form of cruelty directed at another child, may be the insecure child's way of attempting to gain status in the eyes of others, or it may be the child's way of getting even for treatment which he receives from his parents or from other older brothers and sisters.

Arrogance and defiance are the child's ways of saying that he has had too much freedom to give it up now. The spoiled, pampered child may use such actions when he suddenly realizes that the teacher is not going to allow him to have his way all of the time. As disagreeable as this child may appear to be, it is not his fault that he cannot adjust. He needs understanding in order to realize that the rights of others must be respected. The parents must cooperate in any attempt to help this child. All of the good intentions behind pampering can result in only one thing—an unhappy child, unable to

understand why he is not always given what he has come to believe are his rights.

Temper tantrums, if they occur frequently, are serious indications of emotional maladjustment. Punishment should not be used to stop them. The teacher should be firm with the child, but allow him a position in the classroom in which he can feel secure.

Retiring Behavior Is Dangerous

The child who is aggressive is more likely to be recognized as a problem by the teacher than the child who is retiring. More and more teachers realize that the retiring child, while he certainly is not a problem in the sense that he causes trouble in the class, may be a very serious emotional problem. In attempting to determine the extent of retiring behavior which indicates maladjustment, a teacher may ask the following questions about a child:

- Is he overly sensitive, so that he cries frequently?
- Does he daydream a great deal and seem to prefer his daydreams to activities with other children?
- Does he try extremely hard to please, even at the expense of losing friends?
- Is he easily frightened and does he have unusual fears?
- Is he overly selfish?
- Does he make up stories to enhance his own position?

Of course, children frequently cry in the first few weeks of school. This must be recognized as normal, for having to leave the protection of a mother is quite a difficult adjustment for some children to make. If the crying persists, however, steps should be taken to remedy whatever is causing it. It may be that the child is too immature to be away from his mother and before he decides that he completely hates school, it would be better to send him home for another year.

Next year he would be better adapted emotionally to cope with the trials of everyday school problems. It is more important to observe how easily the child gets over his crying than the fact that the child cries occasionally. While it should certainly not be encouraged, crying is an emotional release which some children, particularly girls, may have adopted.

The child who daydreams a great deal and prefers his daydreams to activities with other children is trying to escape from a situation which he finds unpleasant. While such children are certainly no problem in the sense that they disrupt the class, they are serious problems within themselves. Merely forcing the child to participate is no solution and may make the situation worse.

While it is extremely difficult not to like the child who works hard to gain the favor of the teacher, if he does so even at the expense of losing friends, it is a behavior problem. Complete rejection by the teacher is not the answer, but neither is encouragement of the behavior. Providing the child satisfaction in ways more acceptable to the group is one way to divert this desire to please into normal channels.

The child who is easily frightened is insecure. He knows that he fears something, but doesn't know what. Making up fears of unusual things is a way of giving form to his fears. The teacher should not encourage these fears, but neither should he punish the child because of them. As unreasonable as they may sound, they are very real to the child.

Making up stories to enhance one's own position is a natural reaction for an insecure child.

Physical Factors to be Noted

Along with these less tangible factors which the teacher may look for in identi-

fying emotional problems, there are definite physical factors which may be observed. Only one of these might not be an indication of an emotional problem; but it should lead the teacher to ask some of the questions previously listed.

- Does the child bite his nails?
- Does the child have any face twitchings (known as tics)?
- Does the child constantly pull or twist his hair, chew on his clothing, or pick or scratch his body?
- Does he have a weak, high-pitched, or strained voice or is he constantly clearing his throat?
- Is he conscious of excessive overweight or underweight?
- Is he conscious of extreme tallness or shortness?

While certainly not all nail biting is an indication of an emotional maladjustment, it is nevertheless a very important indication. Frequently, it is only a habit, even though there may have been some emotional stress which originally caused it.

Facial twitchings are important symptoms of emotional maladjustment. The teacher is in no position to try to correct this difficulty and should not hesitate to refer the child for psychiatric help.

Pulling or twisting hair, chewing on clothing, and picking and scratching are all signs of nervousness. It is not natural for a young child to be nervous. An effort should be made to remove the child from situations in which he is nervous.

The child's voice is frequently a better indication of his emotional adjustment than any other outward sign. The strained, high-pitched voice reflects extreme tension. Constantly clearing one's throat is also a sign of this tension.

Excessive overweight or underweight, as well as extreme tallness or shortness, necessitate emotional adjustments quite different from those of the average pupil. If the child is unable to make these ad-

justments, the teacher should help him make them.

What Can the Teacher Do?

It is not likely that the teacher will find a child who is a serious emotional problem if only one affirmative answer is given to the questions which have been asked. In most instances, there will be a number of indications. It is the teacher's responsibility to locate emotional problems early in order that steps may be taken to help the child. Following these steps may aid the teacher in doing this. The next logical question which will be asked is, "What can I do about a child who has been identified as having emotional problems?"

Actually, there is a great deal that the teacher can do for this child. Understanding the child is of the greatest importance. Providing the child with a happy school situation in which he can feel secure and in which he can meet success frequently is of the greatest importance. Home visitations and conferences with parents and former teachers frequently will shed much light on the child's problem. The teacher must realize, however, that treatment of serious emotional problems does not lie within his realm. If the school has a psychologist, the child should be referred to him. If not, the parents should be encouraged to take the child to a child guidance center. If the services of these are not available, the child should visit a private psychologist or psychiatrist. If the parents are unable to afford this, almost any of the charitable organizations will give financial assistance.

Recognizing that the child has an emotional problem is a major first step. Determining the reason for the problem is a beneficial next step. Referral in those cases which seem to be of a serious nature is the logical third step.

through children's books

Regions of America Come Alive

An important development in children's literature has been the advent of regional stories. This article serves a triple purpose—to present material on children's literature, to have regional books presented by an outstanding person in the field of children's literature, to present books that would make the Minnesota region come alive. Those planning to attend the ACEI Study Conference in St. Paul, April 18-23, will want to sample and savor the books suggested.

WITH THE COMING OF THE AUTOMOBILE, Americans earned the title of "a nation on wheels." With the advent of the airplane, they sit side by side with their countrymen as they flit from Miami to Seattle, from Los Angeles to New York City. Children are influenced tremendously by the broadened horizons within which they live. Fortunately, there is a book to tell them the story they want to hear about the place they have just visited, or about the place they would like to visit if they could. The widely scattered regions of the United States have come alive in children's books. Credit can be given to juvenile book editors who have sought out authors who can present with understanding and integrity the peoples of our country.

Regional and Universal Appeal

In recent years Lois Lenski has devoted herself to introducing boys and girls of America to each other. *Strauberry Girl* emerges as a real personality in the midst of feuding Florida crackers. Following the crops with a sharecropper family from Alabama, as told in *Judy's Journey*, makes real the problem of grow-

ing up under itinerant farmer conditions. *Blue Ridge Billy* with his fiddle in North Carolina, *Bayou Suzette* in her picturesque Louisiana haunts, *The Texas Tom-boy* on Triangle Ranch, and the children and their teacher in the *Prairie School* all become as real to children as the cotton-picking family and their Arkansas dog in *Cotton in My Sack*. Universal family traits emerge to give oneness of spirit to all these stories; yet each region is revealed clearly in its unique contribution to the United States.

Again in *Indian Captive* and *Puritan Adventure* Lois Lenski pictures the early days in New York, Pennsylvania, and New England through the experiences of children who shared in thrilling adventures for the sake of ideals which are the common heritage of us all.

Marguerite De Angeli has done similar service in presenting children of varied backgrounds in the United States—*Elin's Amerika* for the Swedes of Delaware; *Yonie Wondernose* and *Henner's Lydia* for the Pennsylvania Dutch; *Skippack School* for the Mennonites near Germantown; *Thee Hannah!* for the Quakers of Philadelphia; *Up the Hill* for the Polish children of a Pennsylvania mining town; and *Jared's Island* for Indian adventure and hidden treasure on the Jersey coast.

Dora V. Smith is professor of education at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, and is well known for her work in the field of children's literature.



There is a book to tell them the story they want to hear.

Courtesy, Public Schools, Austin, Texas

Copper-Toed Boots pictures charmingly the life of a boy in central Michigan when the farmers exchanged their produce for what the town had to offer and a boy's pocket-knife was guaranteed to change hands twelve times a year. *Bright April* shows the happiness of a little Negro girl within her family and with the Brownie Scouts. The authenticity of this book is evidenced by the delight of Negro readers in it.

Sometimes, too, individual writers with an intimate knowledge of some one section of the country make it known to children throughout the land. To Laura Ingalls Wilder we are indebted for true Americana in the long series of biographical stories of the trek of her family and that of her husband through the prairie states in log cabin days. In *The Little House in the Big Woods* we first meet Mary and Laura Ingalls and their parents in a tiny log cabin on the edge of the Wisconsin woods. From there they go by covered wagon to Kansas in *The Little House on the Prairie* and then back to the wheatfields of Minnesota in *On the*

Banks of Plum Creek. Laura is thirteen when they stake a claim in Dakota near a railroad camp as told in *By the Shores of Silver Lake*. Throughout all their hardships, the family build a strong sense of identity with each other and with the soil, indomitable in their courage and their faith in the future. In *Farmer Boy* we are first introduced to Almanzo Wilder, whom Laura later marries, and to the difficult days of early farming.

In *The Long Winter*, the Ingalls and the Wilders come together in their life in a town in which the Ingalls have established a small store. *The Little Town on the Prairie* gives a faithful picture of the church socials, the school events, and the literary societies which marked the life of a pioneer community. Finally, in *These Happy Golden Years* Laura becomes a prairie school teacher, marries Almanzo Wilder, and together they look forward to the future, carrying forward the traditions and the hopes which the pioneers brought to the prairies.

The Boston Gardens literally jump out from the pages of *Make Way for Duck-*

lings as do the rugged New England coastal scenes from *One Morning in Maine* and *Blueberries for Sal*. And who, save Vachel Lindsay himself, has ever reproduced the public square of an Illinois or Ohio town with its reception for a returned politician as Robert McCloskey did in *Lentil*? Yet no one would be more surprised than Mr. McCloskey to be called a "regional" writer; all of which indicates the very narrow line which separates the regional from the universal in the best books for children.

Ellis Credle in *Down the Mountain*, Lynd Ward in *The Biggest Bear*, Thelma Bell in *Mountain Boy*, Eric Berry in *One String Fiddle*, and Leon Wilson in *This Boy Cody* have given American boys and girls mountain children to take to their hearts. Similarly, *The Yearling* remains a juvenile classic, bringing the boy of the swamps of Florida and his yearling close to children everywhere.

To Ann Nolan Clark we are indebted for *Little Navajo Bluebird* and *In My Mother's House*. These stories of Indian children of the Southwest are filled with the sympathetic insight and depth of feeling which grew out of her intimate association with the Indian people and the quiet, colorful beauty of the Navajo country. Leo Politi, too, has created picture books of matchless charm showing the quiet lives of the Mexican children in California. *Juanita* and *Pedro, the Angel of Olvera Street* are enriched by the spiritual depth and beauty of the Christmas and Easter celebrations. The fishing village of old Monterey and the mission at Capistrano come to life in *A Boat for Peppe* and *The Song of the Swallows*.

Minnesota Regional Books

Minnesota is proud of its long list of writers for children, among the most

distinguished of whom are Ethel C. Brill, Carol Ryrie Brink, Emma L. Brock, Paul Brown, Mitchell Charnley, Marchette Chute, Mildred H. Comfort, Wanda Gag, Eve Grey, Margaret Ann Hubbard, Meridel LeSueur, Maud Hart Lovelace, Elizabeth Olds, Elizabeth Palmer, Adolph Regli, Rose Sackett, Annette Turngren, and Walter J. Wilwerding. Not all of these writers have dealt with the Minnesota scene, but many of them have contributed much to our knowledge of our own state.

Early Days in Minnesota

Earliest days in Minnesota have been revealed by Rose Sackett in her charming story of Penny Lavendar, whose life at Fort Snelling and St. Paul was full of interest. Maud Hart Lovelace, too, has told a tale of the voyageurs, the traders, and the Indians with vigor and lively detail in *Early Candlelight*. In *They Came from Sweden*, Mrs. Judson brings a family from Sweden to Minnesota to stake out a claim. Cornelia Meigs goes back to Louisiana Purchase days in her *Swift Rivers*, a tale of logging when great trees were floated down the tributaries to the Mississippi. Of all the stories of the very early days, this one contains perhaps the most exciting adventure.

Little Whirlwind, by Margaret Ann Hubbard, though a story of Scotch settlers on the Canadian border of North Dakota around 1823, reveals much of the life of the Indians of this territory. It relates the experiences of a white girl befriended by the Chippewas, and of their wars with the hostile Sioux. *Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol Ryrie Brink, a story set in Wisconsin, shows clearly what the life of an energetic pioneer family was like, with its precarious relations with the Indians and its very occasional but exciting contacts with the world beyond.

The warmth of family life in pioneer

days shines through other stories of the early seventies, when families came West together in covered wagon days, severing all other ties to establish homes on the prairies. *Drusilla*, the corncob doll, tells her own story in Emma Brock's entertaining narrative of the covered wagon journey. Drusilla followed the trail, was jolted off, was rescued by friendly Indians, and finally returned to her owner. A doll also played a curious part in the mystery of Mrs. Means' *Candle in the Mist*. This is a story of family life and hardships, of school teaching on the prairie, and of danger from the Indians. It was an apple tree that Sarah Samantha chose to bring with her when the Glosbrenner family moved to Minnesota and each child was allowed to choose one treasure for the journey. Miriam Mason tells the story with much human interest in *The Middle Sister*.

Laura Ingalls Wilder's *On the Banks of Plum Creek* describes, with characteristic warmth and appreciation for pioneer life on the prairie, her family's experiences in the Minnesota wheat country. Although fire and flood and grasshoppers lend excitement to the plot, it is her intimate telling of daily life in the family which makes her story especially worth while. On a more mature level, Walter and Marion Havighurst reveal the same struggles in *High Prairie*.

Susannah's home was in Minneapolis in the days when folks lived on Eighth Street and Nicollet Avenue, the center of today's shopping district. Indians poked their fingers in the loaves of bread they coveted in Susannah's kitchen. A fifth-grade love affair, however, was much the same as it would be today, though the teacher bought her clothes out of *Godey's Ladies' Book*. Minneapolis children love *Oh Susannah!*—Ruth and Richard Holberg's story of their own city's early years.

Some boys and girls in the 1870's lived on boats on the rivers. Mildred Houghton Comfort has caught the spirit of one such family in *Winter on the Johnny Smoker*, an old side-wheeler from steamboat days on the Mississippi, tied up at Read's Landing for the winter. Food was plentiful and each member of the family helped to secure and prepare it. Even the red flannel in the lamp chimney gave a feeling of warmth to the evening meal, though the excitement of the story centers in being first to break the ice in the river in the Spring in order to win free dockage in St. Paul for the summer months. *Treasure on the Johnny Smoker*, a sequel, adds the excitement of fur trading.

Injuns Comin! by Pearson and Bullis introduces the thrill of the Indian wars as does Elizabeth Palmer's *Up the River to Danger!* The latter's *Give Me a River* and *Nightingale House* are pleasant stories reminiscent of the visit of the Swedish nightingale to Stillwater. When the boat stuck in the river and she couldn't reach the town, the whole community went out to her, and she sang from the deck of the boat.

Betsy-Tacy, who were so inseparable that their lives were hyphenated as well as their names, grew up in Mankato at the turn of the century. Their picnics, their paper dolls, and their dress-up parties as revealed by Maud Hart Love-lace delight the hearts of Minnesota girls today. Then came Tib in *Betsy-Tacy and Tib*. Real history-in-the-making appears in *Down Town* when the little girls see a performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the local theater, attend the opening of the new Carnegie Library, and experience the wonder of a first automobile.

Lakes, Rivers, and Forests

Minnesota is not all prairie although the pioneer stories would lead one to

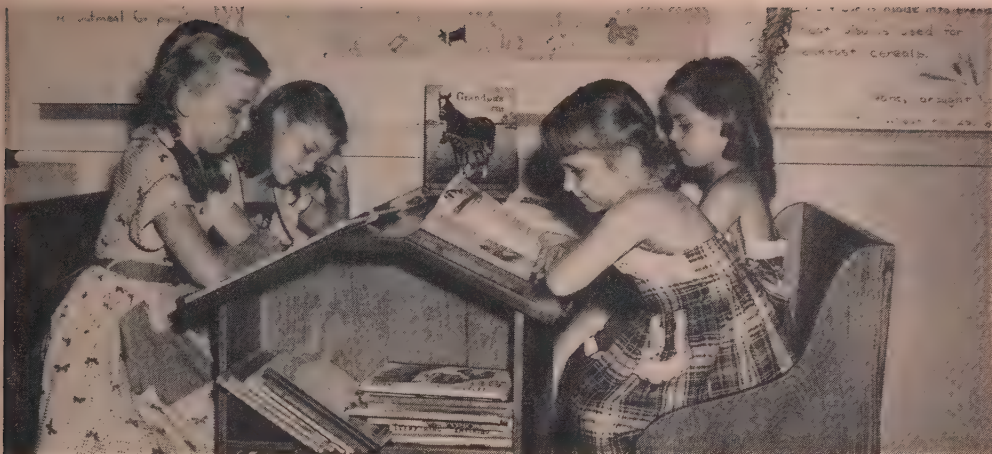


Photo by Philip A. Jacobson, Wilmette, Ill.

Widely scattered regions have come alive in children's books.

think so. Waves beat upon the shores of Lake Superior, the largest of the Great Lakes. In size, these waves, whipped up by a good Northeaster, might be in the Atlantic or the Pacific. At many places no sign of a distant shore is visible. Across the waters of Lake Superior ride the great ore boats shaped like the Viking ships of the land from which our Norwegian fishermen came.

Holling C. Holling's *Paddle-to-the-Sea* has already won an established place for itself in children's literature. It is the story of a tiny boat with an Indian in it, carved out of wood by a French Canadian boy at Nipigon. The little boat bore the inscription, "I am Paddle-to-the-Sea, bound for Paris. Please put me back into the water." Paddle-to-the-Sea starts the long voyage from Nipigon to the Seine. En route, he sails the waters of Lake Superior, watches the ore boats load at Duluth from the tiny freight cars which come down the narrow gauge track from Minnesota's Iron Range, and knows the thrill of logging in thickly forested areas. The colorful picture and simple, clear maps make this book treasured by children of the North.

Ethel C. Brill in *When Lighthouses Are Dark* tells of a girl and three boys icebound during the winter on an island in Lake Superior. Something of the awesome size and the curious intimacy of nature in these parts emerges from the backgrounds of the story.

The Mississippi, too, has left its mark on life with the state. Minnesota children in Itasca Park cross its tiny source on stepping stones as they read on a nearby stone slab:

"Here 1475 feet above the ocean the Mighty Mississippi begins its flow on its winding way 2552 miles to the Gulf of Mexico."

Its major tributary in this state, the Minnesota River, was the chief waterway by which the Indians and whites opened up the rich farm lands in what is now known as the Minnesota valley. *Minn of the Mississippi* travels the great river. Early in the journey to the Gulf of Mexico, Minn passes the flour mills of Minneapolis and the railroad center of St. Paul. Holling has made a second important contribution in this colorful book.

Minnesota is a land of hot summers and cold winters, offering its children a

wide variety of outdoor activities. Its ten thousand lakes are good for both swimming and skating, though curiously enough, no children's book makes use of them. In Eve Grey's delightful *Elsa's Secret*, winter sports and a loose tooth combine to make a childlike and interesting story. The boys come down on their sleds through a snow tunnel supported by the barn roof and a rise of ground. They offer to pull the string dangling from the loose tooth of a fearful little girl if she will stand at the point where they emerge from the tunnel. Two front teeth are eventually left in the witch's apple by a chagrined Snow White in one of the most vivid Christmas programs ever presented.

From time to time a stray bear or moose wanders harmlessly out of the Superior National Forest in search of food or warmth. None was ever reproduced more gloriously in all its sedate manginess than Honk in Phil Stong's *Honk: The Moose*. The dialect of the people, the determination of the moose, and the dogged perseverance of boys and men make this one of the most humorous and truly indigenous stories that have come out of Minnesota.

Everyday and Special Day Happenings

Minnesota has made football history on more than one occasion. "The East Side," well known university district of Minneapolis, still has its crowds and excitement on Saturday afternoons during the football season. Children race up and down the streets selling football banners, pins, and parking space. No one has caught the spirit of this scene better than Carol Ryrie Brink in *Grandstand Family*. They were the envy of the whole East Side, for their house, true to St. Anthony Village form, had a cupola high enough to command a grandstand view inside the football stadium. Even the professor

breaks down in the end of the story and allows his children to sell parking space in the driveway to befriend a distinguished colleague in danger of missing the kickoff.

In February the circus theme is often found in Twin City schools, for the Shrine Circus has come to town. The Shrine has no idea what a boost it gives to children's reading, not to mention art, music, and dramatics. Prime favorite is Emma Brock's *Three Ring Circus*, which bows to rival cities by opening with a boy and a girl from St. Paul at the Shrine Circus in Minneapolis. But that is just the start of the story which centers in the effects of the circus on the heroine whose aspiration from that time forward is to be a bareback rider. The whole community suffers, but no more than she does until she is finally saved from the effects of her antics by a change in aspiration occasioned by attending a famous Artists' Course Concert at the Northrop Memorial Auditorium.

Marchette Chute's poetry for children grew out of her childhood experience at Lake Minnetonka. *Rhymes about Ourselves*, *Rhymes about the Country*, and *Rhymes about the City* have a childlike quality in their imaginative presentation of everyday scenes and events which endear them to Minnesota children. Everything—from growing a garden, getting mittens for Christmas, and going to bed—to playing pirates and meeting up with fairies appears with delicate silhouettes to match in the pages of her books.

Perhaps it is well to end this series of pictures of Minnesota children with the story of two farm boys and their horse in Emma Brock's *Here Comes Kristie*. The chores were hard and the day was hot, so what could Minnesota farm boys do but buy a horse to take them to the nearest stream for a swim? All they had was \$14.76. Kristie was

worth that, but no more. They bought her from a farmer who stood every Saturday night against a lamp post in front of the drug store on Main Street. That was fortunate because Kristie developed one eccentricity after another so that each week the boys had to visit the lamp post for advice. They always got it—an element which lends much humor to the story.

Every fourth year St. Paul has a Festival of Nations. National groups set up food stands gaily decorated with the colors of their homelands and displaying delectable foods from "the old country." Programs of folk dances delight the crowds who pour into the huge auditorium. Often a pageant concludes the week's festivities, showing the contributions of these peoples to Minnesota life and letters and the welding of them into one people. No children's story has yet come from this colorful celebration nor from St. Paul's Winter Carnival nor from the Minneapolis Aquatennial Celebration each summer. An adult book, however, which is very useful as a reference source for older boys and girls is Alice Sickels' *Around the World in St. Paul*.

Two biographies represent Minnesota's great for her children. Alma Scott, beloved friend and neighbor of Wanda Gag, has told the story of her life in what she herself called "a little Old World Bohemian community called New Ulm, Minnesota." Adolph Regli also did *The Mayos—Pioneers of Medicine*, a simple biography revealing the growth of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester and telling the story of the devotion of the father and sons whose vision and effort made the venture possible.

Another "great" man stands beside his blue ox on the shore of Lake Bemidji. At Brainerd men let their beards grow long for the annual Paul Bunyan Fes-

tival. Along with the children of many other states Minnesota boys and girls call the giant logger theirs. Ida Turney's *Paul Bunyan, the Work Giant* reveals him in text and pictures for the younger children. Wadsworth's *Paul Bunyan and His Great Blue Ox*, McCormick's *Paul Bunyan Swings His Axe*, and Glen Rounds' *Ole Paul, Mighty Logger* are equally popular with older children. Perhaps the more mature will be equal to James Stevens' *Paul Bunyan* with woodcuts by Allen Lewis or Felton's *Legends of Paul Bunyan* or Esther Shephard's *Paul Bunyan* with distinguished Rockwell Kent pictures.

On the bank of Minnehaha Creek just before it leaps in foamy grandeur into the gorge that leads to Fort Snelling is a delicate bronze statue of Hiawatha carrying Minnehaha across the water. In winter, Minnehaha Falls is a gorgeous cavern of ice under which Minnesota boys love to climb. In summer, it is the favorite picnic spot of Twin City children. Time was when the lines,

"Hiawatha was an Indian boy,

Nokomis was his grandmother."

opened every first-grade reader in the Minneapolis schools. Today Minnesota children cling to the story as their own. There are many useful editions, ranging from Chafee's recent one in combined prose and verse with gorgeous pictures in striking if gaudy colors, through *The Children's Own Longfellow to The Song of Hiawatha* with illustrations and designs by Frederic Remington and N. C. Wyeth.

So Minnesota reveals itself in books for children. For this wealth of material her people are grateful; but as in every region, the wonder is that so much is left unsaid. The great gaps in the story, the intimate details yet to be brought out, should be a challenge to future writers in Minnesota and elsewhere.

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NEWS and REVIEWS

News HERE and THERE . . .

By FRANCES HAMILTON

Retirement

Ora Lee Everts retired from her position as a member of the faculty at Glassboro, New Jersey, State Teachers College. She has been a member of the staff for twenty-five years and has served as chairman of the Department of Early Childhood Education and principal of the Demonstration School. Miss Everts has been an active member of the New Jersey ACEI and founded the Glassboro State Teachers College ACEI.

Changes

Margaret Hampel has been appointed professor of education at Marshall College, Huntington, West Virginia. She was formerly associate professor of education at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Eva King, of Wichita, Kansas, has been appointed to the newly-created position of director of elementary education for Sedgwick County, Kansas.

Elizabeth C. Lloyd, assistant professor of elementary education and director of the nursery school of Washington University, St. Louis, became professor of early childhood education at the University of Delaware in September.

Anna Eva McLin retired June 30 as director of the Child Education Foundation. *Lucile Brickner Brown* has been appointed as her successor.

ACEI Permanent Headquarters

Fifty-two people who visited ACEI headquarters during the last month sought information and assistance. Help was needed with the selection of equipment for schools and play centers, films to be used with parent groups, good books for teachers and parents. A group met at headquarters to lay plans for a county kindergarten program. Visitors from the United States, India, Burma, Australia, England, Pakistan, The Bahamas, Japan, Egypt, and The Netherlands made the staff at

headquarters realize again the need for a different kind of ACEI home.

The search for the permanent headquarters for the Association continues. Services to those who are concerned with children can be strengthened and increased through such a headquarters as described in Area V, 1953-55 Plan of Action. The recognition of this need gives impetus to the planning of individuals and groups to contribute. The ACEI headquarters building fund now totals \$8,986.21.

New Publications of ACEI

Seven Test Centers located in the United States and Canada have made recommendations of materials and equipment for use with children in the latest revision of *Recommended Equipment and Supplies* just published by ACEI.

A special feature of this revision is the inclusion of the sources for purchasing listed equipment in Canada.

Suggested lists of materials and equipment for use with children in nursery, kindergarten, primary and intermediate groups are given. The four ACEI Committees representing these age levels have made careful study and revision of these lists.

Material in the bulletin is arranged for easy reference. In addition to the suggested lists for each school, there is a list of approved items by classification, with age level, and name and address of manufacturer.

Recommended Equipment and Supplies is an 80-page bulletin which may be bought from the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200-15th St., N. W., Washington 5, D. C., for \$1 a copy.

Advertising in Literature with Children is the title of a new portfolio published by ACEI. Leland B. Jacobs, Teachers College, Columbia University, has acted as adviser on the portfolio. Leaflets on the following subjects will be of interest to those who seek ways to enrich life for children through the enjoyment of literature:

Building a Balanced Classroom Library—

Leland B. Jacobs

Making Poetry Live with Children—Leland

B. Jacobs

Enjoying Great Stories and Classics—

Mabel F. Altstetter

Fostering Independent Reading at Home and School—Miriam E. Wilt
 Stories and the Curriculum—May Hill Arbutnot
 Guidance Resources in Literature—David H. Russell
 Records of Children's Reading—Ferne Shipley
 Choral Reading in the Classroom—Ruth G. Strickland
 Enriching Literature Through Storytelling—Frances Clarke Sayers
 Extending Creative Experiences Through Literature—Evelyn Wenzel
 Using Audio-Visual Materials with Literature—Shelton L. Root, Jr.
 Coping with the Comics—Constance Carr
 Order from the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200-15th St. N. W., Washington 5, D. C. Price, 75¢.

UNESCO Handbook for ACE Branches

The 1953 *UNESCO Handbook for ACE Branches* is now available. This handbook was prepared by a committee composed of the following members: Elizabeth Neterer, Oma Belle McBee, Elsie Pitts, Vera Coulter, chairman. Maycie Southall, consultant for the UNESCO Committee of ACEI, has written the foreword. The book contains information concerning materials on UNESCO and the United Nations and a report on what ACE branches and the International Association did for others in 1952-53.

Mabel McKinney Smith Honored

Mabel McKinney Smith is the recipient of the First Alumnae Award of the National College of Education at Evanston. The award was made in recognition of Mrs. Smith's years of devoted service to childhood education.

Mrs. Smith was president of the International Kindergarten Union in 1911-13.

Full Time Student Teaching Program

A full time student teaching program is under way this fall at National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois. Students enrolled in the pilot course will spend the first nine weeks teaching full time in an off-campus elementary school and the second nine weeks in concentrated study in college classes.

"It will provide an intermediate step between the half-day teaching done by underclassmen and the full time teaching the graduate will do on his first paid teaching assign-

ment," explains Agnes Adams, who will direct the program with the assistance of Bertha Leifeste and Elizabeth Springstun.

International Conference on Public Education

The 16th International Conference on Public Education sponsored by UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education was held at Geneva, Switzerland, July 6-15. The major topic for discussion at the conference was the training and status of primary teachers, together with brief reports on the progress of education during the year 1952-53, presented by ministries of education. Study of these questions forms part of UNESCO's long-term program for the gradual application of the principle of free and compulsory education, in which teacher-training is an important factor.

Educational Television

"A New Opportunity for Television in Your Community" is the subject of a brochure just published by the National Citizens Committee for Educational Television. This publication lists many of the values of educational television and in words, pictures, and statistics describes how community groups are working together to make educational television available to the children and adults of their communities. Copies of the brochure are available from the National Citizens Committee for Educational Television, Ring Building, 1200-18th St. N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

Exchange Teachers

Ninety-eight British teachers are exchanging teaching positions with the same number of American teachers during the 1953-54 school year. This is part of the exchange program sponsored by the Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Of the British teachers fifty are in elementary schools.

National Book Week

"Reading is Fun" is the theme of the 35th annual observance of National Book Week celebrated this year November 15-21. Thirty-one organizations cooperate with the Children's Book Council in planning for this event. Book Week posters, book marks, and phonograph records to be used in recognition of Book Week may be secured from the Children's Book Council, 50 West 53d Street, New York 19, N. Y.

PLAY STORE— PUPPET STAGE

An ingeniously designed piece of equipment which can be used as a play store or puppet stage. The play store is 48" high, 45" wide and 5½" deep. Three boards fit into the grooves in the sides to provide shelves for merchandise display. Wide counter board has room for cash register, telephone and other storekeeping accessories. Shelf section is backed with masonite panel. Top sign board treated with slate paint.



Turn store frame around so that masonite panel faces out. The counter becomes a puppet stage. Back shelves store puppets and properties.

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EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Books for Children . . .

Editor, VERA PETERSEN

MAGGIE ROSE. Her Birthday Christmas. By Ruth Sawyer. Illustrated by Maurice Sendak. New York: Harper and Brothers, 49 E. 33rd St., 1952. Pp. 151, 5 x 7 1/4 in., \$2. Maggie Rose is a superb story to begin for boys and girls of eight to twelve that procession of distinguished Christmas literature.

Ruth Sawyer, impeccable storyteller, has presented in a coast-of-Maine setting the almost unbelievable Maggie Rose and her proud but improvident family, the Bunkers.

"They were the happiest and laziest family along the road, paying as little heed to their dirt and clutter as they did to their neighbor's scorn. Tim and Liz and their brood of seven were soft-spoken and well-mannered. They held their heads as high as their neighbors and had their own pride in what they considered important. Maggie Rose was important to them.

"What none of them said but secretly marveled at was that Maggie Rose liked to work. There wasn't a lazy bone in the whole of her thin, little body."

One finishes the story not only admiring the indomitable Maggie Rose but loving the whole lot of lazy Bunkers! How Maggie Rose managed to earn the money and finally engage her family in helping to prepare for the birthday Christmas is an exquisite and poignant story.

CHRISTMAS KITTEN. By Janet Konkle. Illustrated with photographs by the author. Color sketches by Katherine Evans. Chicago: Children's Press, Jackson Blvd. and Racine Ave., 1953. Pp. 29, 7 x 9 in., \$1.50. Janet Konkle knows at just what split second to snap her camera. She knows, too, how to provide a rich black background and highlight her subject. Her photography makes delightfully attractive illustrations for a young child's book.

A stray kitten wanders into a house on Christmas Eve, investigates the tree and its trimmings, and finally settles in among some holly paper wrappings where she is found on the joyous morning by the children who live at that house.

Color is added with Christmas red end-
(Continued on page 144)

MACMILLAN BOOKS for the School Library

Our Country, America

by Christie McFall

Illus. by the author

The story of our country dramatically presented in maps, charts and story-telling illustrations with brief text.

Ages 10-14

\$2.75

The circus came to town on April Fool's Day, but that couldn't explain all the crazy things that happened.

Ages 8-12

\$2.00

Circus: April 1st

by Louis Slobodkin

Illus. by the author

The Friendly Phoebe

by Berta and
Elmer Hader

Illus. by the authors

About a baby bird that the McGintys adopted when they found it on their terrace at Willow Hill.

Ages 8-10

\$2.25

A story of the early West and the Major who brought camels to America to help build roads.

Ages 8-10

\$2.00

Illustrated by Zhenya Gay

The Major and His Camels

by Miriam E. Mason

Old Whirlwind

by Elizabeth
Coatsworth

A colorful incident in the life of Davy Crockett when he was twelve years old.

Ages 8-10

\$2.00

Illustrated by Manning Lee

A troupe of amazingly clever dogs come to their master's aid when he is in trouble.

Ages 8-12

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Illus. by Robert Henneberger

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The PLATT & MUNK CO., Inc.
200 Fifth Ave., N. Y.

Books for Children

(Continued from page 143)

papers and gay little color sketches around the pages of text. A story to please the three- to six-group.

AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS. By Gian-Carlo Menotti. Narrative adaptation by Frances Frost. Illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. New York: Whittlesey House, 330 W. 42nd St., 1952. Pp. 89, 6 x 9 in., \$2.75.

Menotti's short Christmas opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, has in two holiday seasons humbled and enriched many audiences. Its appeal is not, as has been evidenced by the repeated listening of even young children, limited to adults.

Amahl is a little crippled boy to whose cottage the Three Wise Men come and ask for a night's lodging on their journey to find the Christ Child. During their stay a miracle is performed—the boy can walk and without his crutch. Climaxing the story, Amahl is permitted to ride along with one of the Wise Men, so that he too can go to praise the newborn King.

(Continued on page 146)

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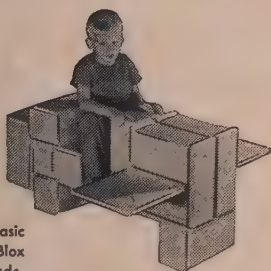
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long look at our educational play
equipment listed therein.

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Books for Children

(Continued from page 144)

Boys and girls from eight up will enjoy the book version with its narrative adaptation tying together the exact dialogue of the opera. They will also like the many brisk, colored pictures as well as the black and white drawings so ably contributed by Roger Duvoisin.

It is an added pleasure to follow the book as one listens to the faultless musical recording provided by RCA Victor. (Red Seal, non-breakable record LM 1701 for 33 1/3 speed, a single 12 inch disk.)

PETUNIA'S CHRISTMAS. By Roger Duvoisin. Illustrated by the author. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 501 Madison Ave., 1952.

Pp. 29, 8 x 10 in., \$2. Those of you who have become acquainted with the jaunty little goose Petunia in either of two earlier volumes will be curious to know what she does for the holidays. In this story, the enterprising Petunia discovers Charles, a neighbor's gander, who is being fattened for Christmas.

Four- to eight-year-olds will chuckle over both story and pictures of Petunia camouflag-

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ing herself as a goose-footed-flying-dragon to try to help Charles escape.

Poor Petunia how she cried when she did not succeed. "But then she thought of the farmer's words: 'Twenty pounds at seventy-five cents. . . Twenty times seventy-five cents. That's a lot of money. If I had it I could buy Charles' freedom. I am going to earn it.' And earn it she *did*!

"Petunia and Charles were married on Christmas Day. The barnyard had never seen so much dancing, singing and feasting. It was a very, very, merry Christmas."

NOEL FOR JEANNE-MARIE. *By Francoise. Illustrated by the author. New York: Scribner, 597 Fifth Ave., 1953. Pp. 31, 8 x 9¾ in., \$2.25.* A special joy for the four-to-eighths this Christmas is another charming book printed in bold black manuscript with gay colored illustrations by Francoise. In this new story the little white sheep Patapon (originally in *Jeanne-Marie Counts Her Sheep*, Scribner, 1951) is again the key figure.

Jeanne-Marie tells Patapon about Noel, the birthday of little Jesus. "And," she tells her

sheep, "there is something more about Noel. If you are very good Father Noel brings you presents. He comes in the night. No one sees him, no one at all. I put my wooden shoes near the chimney and Father Noel fills them with presents. You will see, Patapon, you will see. . ."

The obliging Patapon is saddened by the fact that sheep cannot take off their shoes. "Patapon," said Jeanne-Marie, "if you are very good maybe you will get something anyway," and Jeanne-Marie hurries off to purchase a tiny pair of wooden shoes for Patapon.

Father Noel did come and he left sumptuous gifts indeed! For Patapon there was a yellow

(Continued on page 150)

PERRY

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The revised edition of Emma D. Sheehy's popular book, **THERE'S MUSIC IN CHILDREN**, offers the teacher many practical suggestions for developing and encouraging the child's own natural love of music. Especially helpful are the new chapters on Music and the Classroom Teacher, and Music Experiences for Teachers. 1952 \$2.25

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Books for Children

(Continued from page 147)

satin ribbon with a bow and a little tinkling bell that sang Noel! Noel! Noel!

* * * *

Much of the joy of Christmas is in sharing and one of the finest ways for adults to share is to seek out some choice older literature and read it to their children. Listed below are a few suggestions to help you in starting your Christmas collection.

Nursery and Kindergarten

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS. By Robbie Trent. Illustrated by Marc Simont. New York: Harper and Brothers, 49 E. 33rd St., 1948. \$1. Unexcelled in simplicity of text and picture.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS. By Clement C. Moore. Illustrated by Gustaf Tenggren. New York: Simon and Schuster, 630 Fifth Ave., 1951. \$1. A Big Golden Book beautifully illustrated, and one that will delight young readers, for it is printed in large type.

Kindergarten and Primary

PADDY'S CHRISTMAS. By Helen A. Monsell. Illustrations by Kurt Wiese. New York: Knopf, 501 Madison Ave., 1942. \$1.75. The delightfully jolly story of a bear cub who tries to find out what Christmas is. He learns that "it is pretty, it's loads of fun, and it makes you feel good from the inside out"—and that means doing something for somebody else which makes them happy as well as yourself.

A LITTLE CHILD. Compiled by Jessie Orton Jones. Illustrated by Elizabeth Orton Jones. New York: Viking, 18 E. 48th St., 1946. \$2. Charming illustrations show elementary school children preparing for and presenting a page-ant of the Christmas story.

Primary and Intermediate

THE CHRIST CHILD. Text according to Matthew and Luke. Illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham. New York: Doubleday, 575 Madison Ave., 1931. \$2.75.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS. Illustrated by Ilonka Karasz. New York: Harper and Brothers, 49 E. 33rd St., 1949. \$1.50.
(Continued on page 155)

Metropolitan Readiness Tests

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World Book Company

Books for Adults . . .

Editors, Dept. of Education
NISTC, DeKalb, Illinois

FREEDOM AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.

Edited by Ernest O. Melby and Morton Puner. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 105 W. 40th St., 1953. Pp. 314. \$4.

NEW CHALLENGES TO OUR SCHOOLS.

Edited by Sturgess F. Carey. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 950 University Ave., 1953. Pp. 214. \$1.75. During the past few years public education has been under attack from a variety of sources, and with a variety of purposes, some legitimate and some questionable. There is no question that the general public has shifted its attitude from one of uncritical acceptance and approval to one of doubt and concern for what the schools are doing.

A constellation of causes brought about this soul-searching. Shortages in teacher supply, high costs of building construction, increasing

costs of operation, controversial programs of education may be cited as contributory.

The two books listed above contribute greatly to a clear description of these problems. Both are remarkably alike in the selection of contents, and both make a distinct contribution to the literature by collecting from a variety of sources fragmentary and fugitive articles from magazines and pamphlets. However, in spite of the likeness in organization, the books do not duplicate their contents. Each presents different materials from different sources.

Every teacher and parent who wishes to keep up-to-date on current issues raging over our schools would do well to become acquainted with these books.—Reviewed by WILBUR A. YAUCH.

EFFECTIVE HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONS.

By James L. Hymes, Jr. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 70 Fifth Ave., 1953. Pp. 257. \$3.50. "Today, educators and conscientious parents are alarmed by community conflicts over public education. . . For years the growing complexity of our society has steadily (Continued on page 152)

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THE WONDERFUL STORY OF HOW YOU WERE BORN

Highest praise from educators, religious leaders, doctors, and psychologists have gone hand in hand with continually rising sales to herald the new leader in books of sex education for children.

The former director of the Child Study Association of America gently, naturally, and fully unfolds the mystery that puzzles every child. There is also a separate guide to parents on how to use the book. Full-color pictures of children, parents, and animals by Hildegard Woodward add to the warmth and charm.

"Those who have not been satisfied with older books . . . here will find everything . . . an outstanding contribution by a famous child psychologist . . . wholly admirable."

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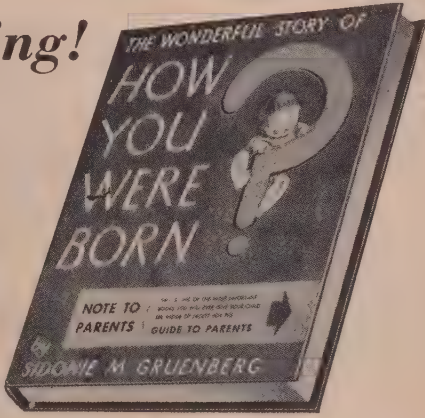
—N. Y. Times

" . . . beautifully conceived and tenderly written . . ."

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"Good taste keeps birth and sex beautiful and wonderful."

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—Understanding the Child



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—Parents Magazine
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—Louisville Courier Journal

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Books for Adults

(Continued from page 151)

pulled our homes and schools away from each other. . . Effective home-school relations can bridge the chasm created by the lack of understanding between parents and teachers."

Thus, Dr. Hymes begins one of the most helpful and timely answers to our difficulties as described in the two books previously reviewed. He bases his proposals on the logical and sound assumption that, while good home-school relations will not substitute for a good school program, it is an indispensable adjunct to it. The success of this program indisputably depends upon the skill of the individual teacher.

This is an excellent handbook for both teachers and parents as a means of avoiding the common pitfalls of home-school relations, and building a new one on solid ground. The author helps teachers to understand parents and vice versa. The main portion of the book is devoted to concrete suggestions for improving the quality of home-school contacts. It is written in an easy, entertaining, and warm style. Every teacher and parent should have a copy.—Reviewed by WILBUR A. YAUCH.

BRIGHT CHILDREN. By Norma E. Cutler and Nicholas Mosely. New York: G. L. Putnam's Sons, 210 Madison Ave., 195.

Pp. 238. \$3.50. A simple and interesting guide to recognizing and helping bright children—those with I.Q.'s of 120 or above. People are becoming aware of the fact that we are not helping bright children to make the most of their capabilities and are beginning to demand that we identify them early in life and guide them wisely. Parents are particularly concerned, and this book is an attempt to answer some of the questions they raise about bringing up a bright child. It tells what signs of brightness they should look for, and gives simple, down-to-earth suggestions as to how to help such children make good social adjustments and reach the highest level of achievement of which they are capable.

The authors frequently quote statements by bright children expressing their feelings, their goals, their ways of thinking and acting. They also quote statements of teachers about bright children. Among the topics discussed are health, discipline, education, reading, sports, hobbies, college preparation, and occupational choice.—Reviewed by IRENE FELTMAN.

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Bulletins and Pamphlets

Editor, JAMES KNIGHT

TEACHING TECHNIQUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES GRADES 3 TO 6.

By Annette Frank, Ralphine Kessler, and Tillie Pine. New York: 69 Bank Street Publications, 1953. Pp. 28. 50¢. This pamphlet is an

outgrowth of a workshop conducted by the Bank Street College of Education and the Board of Education of New York City. It deals largely with the "how" of adapting new methods and techniques of teaching social studies to various curriculum situations. It is crowded with practical suggestions and describes in detail a reading center, a science center, and an arts and crafts center, giving a list of materials needed in each of these.

The teacher concerned with specifics will be delighted with the step-by-step development of "lessons" intended to help children understand the relationships that give meaning to facts, to value man's achievement, and to feel

related through their own experiences to an ever-widening community of men.

In the various activities suggested, the writers have kept in mind the wide range of academic capacities of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children and have developed a program which exploits a variety of skills.—Reviewed by LOLA TULLOS, University of Texas, Austin.

YOUR PROBLEMS: HOW TO HANDLE THEM.

Junior Life Adjustment Booklet. By Herman H. Remmers and Robert H. Bauernfeind. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 57 W. Grand Ave., 1953. Pp. 40. 40¢. This booklet is prepared especially

for use by children in the upper elementary grades and junior high school. It contains many questionnaires, check lists, and true-false tests which a youngster may use in helping him determine what his problems are and just why each is a problem for him. The authors describe various solutions that others have used when confronted with similar situations.

Discussions center around problems about yourself, health problems, problems at home, (Continued on page 154)

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• TIME FOR TRUE TALES and Almost True

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Bulletins and Pamphlets

(Continued from page 153)

getting along with other people, and getting along in school.—Reviewed by LOLA TULLOS.

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY IN CHILDREN. By Constance J. Foster. Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 57 W. Grand Ave. In this booklet Miss Foster has formulated with maximum clarity the goals to be achieved in developing responsibility in children and has stated specifically some practices for achieving them.

Each chapter is characterized by a wealth of suggestions for teaching children to accept responsibility as a natural part of everyday

living. The importance of timing is stressed as each stage of development from birth to adulthood is discussed. The point is made that "a sense of responsibility is in a sense caught, not taught. Feelings, ideas, and emotions are readily communicated by parents and teachers to children."—Reviewed by LOLA TULLOS.

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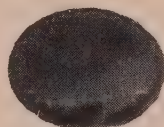
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Books for Children

(Continued from page 150)

THE CHRISTMAS ANNA ANGEL. By Ruth Sawyer. Illustrated by Kate Seredy. New York: Viking, 18 E. 48th St., 1944. \$2. A touching story of a little girl's Christmas in Hungary.

Intermediate and Upper

Excerpts from longer books sometimes serve as excellent Christmas stories:

THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS. By Kenneth Grahame. Illustrated by Arthur Rackham. New York: Heritage, 595 Madison Ave., 1944. \$2.75. Or Illustrated by Ernest Shepard. New York: Scribner, 597 Fifth Ave., 1953 ed. \$2.50.

THE GOOD MASTER. By Kate Seredy. Illustrated by the author. New York: Viking, 18 E. 48th St., 1935. \$2.75.

THE BIRDS' CHRISTMAS CAROL. By Kate Douglas Wiggin. Illustrated by Jessie Gillespie. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2 Park Ave., 1941. \$2.



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Over the Editor's Desk

Listening to Children

Have you noticed the Maurice Sendak illustrations from Ruth Krauss' *A Hole Is to Dig?* (Harper, 1952). Ruth Krauss is someone who took time to hear what children were saying—appropriate for an issue on "Observing Children."

While we were in correspondence with Miss Krauss, she supplied us with some more "first definitions." She said that they might be shared with you with the note that they were from her forthcoming book.

Medium height—"a little bit long and a little bit short."

Promoted—"I was changed up today."

Shovel—"I have a new digger."

Quarreled—"They got to be unfriends."

Space-time—"I'm four and a half years high."

A first science definition—"This is a tepee. Here's the entrance, a little hole. Here's the Indian inside the entrance. And if any real Indians tried to get in, they couldn't. *They'd bang their heads on the paper.*"

A first philosophy (a six-year-old)—"She always says it's good to be first—first in class, first in line, first in a race. I sure would hate to be killed first."

Next Month

"Children's Time," the topic for December, is full of interesting material for discussion and use.

"Life sets up a framework of time demands . . ." want to read more? See Marian Nesbitt's editorial.

Other discussion will cover:

Adult-made time in which the child must learn to live;

Children's time in school—is it spent profitably for "learning at its best?"

Twenty-four hours a day with children—school camping;

"Johnny shares his day with us" say the mother and teacher;

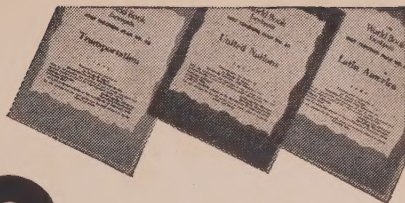
What's the hurry?—other countries look at time and its use.

Isn't that an intriguing set of articles? Watch for them in the December issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

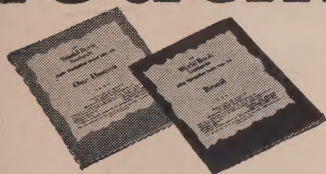
The second section on "Creativity" was prepared by George Raab, Scarsdale, N. Y.

News and reviews bring information on happenings and materials.

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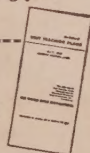
Selected teachers in five school systems, public and parochial, all of whom had and used World Book Encyclopedia in their classrooms, kept a running anecdotal record for a full year. From these records, and through individual and group conferences, all under the direction of Dr. George H. Reavis, Educational Counselor of Field Enterprises, a set of try-out teaching plans was developed, written, analyzed, and criticized.

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